

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 044805

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ORIGIN NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

ACDA-19 T-03 GAC-01 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00

RSC-01 DODE-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 IO-13 OMB-01 /119 R

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3/10/73 EXT 21714

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EUR/ WE: GHSHEINBAUM

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O R 101907 Z MAR 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 044805

E. O. 11652 - GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EECM, XF

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 044805

SUBJECT: EC MEETING ON MIDDLE EAST

REF: BRUSSELS 1224; ROME 1849

1. FOLLOWING IS GUIDANCE FOR DISCUSSING MRS. MEIR' S RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON WITH FOREIGN OFFICE.

2. IN OUR VIEW, VALUE OF RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH MRS. MEIR (LIKE THOSE WITH KING HUSSEIN AND HAFEZ ISMAIL), LAY IN OPPORTUNITY THEY AFFORDED TO OBTAIN LATEST SENIOR-LEVEL THINKING IN ISRAEL ON HOW THEY ASSESS PRESENT M. E. SITUATION AND HOW THEY SEE PROSPECTS FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO RESOLVE ARAB- ISRAELI DISPUTE. TALKS WITH LEADERS OF THREE COUNTRIES MOST DIRECTLY INVOLVED WERE NOT OCCASION FOR ANY NEW PROPOSALS OR INITIATIVES. RATHER, THEY SHOULD BE SEEN AS LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR FRESH LOOK AT PROBLEM AND CONTINUING DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY IN PERIOD AHEAD AIMED AT GETTING GENUINE NEGOTIATING PROCESS STARTED. WE WOULD HAVE BEEN HAPPY IF THESE LEADERS HAD COME FORWARD WITH NEW IDEAS FOR GENERATING MOVEMENT TOWARD PEACE, BUT FACT IS THEY DID NOT DO SO. WE TOLD ALL THREE THAT NEITHER WE NOR THEY COULD AFFORD TO BE COMPLACENT ABOUT PRESENT SITUATION IN MIDDLE EAST, AND WE BELIEVE TIME IS RIPE TO MOVE OFF " DEAD CENTER."

3. WE RECOGNIZE THERE HAS BEEN AN EXPECTATION IN SOME QUARTERS THAT THE U. S. WOULD BE LAUNCHING SOME NEW DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ASSOCIATED WITH THIS VIEW IS THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE CLOSE AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL PLACES THE U. S. IN POSITION TO EXERT COMPELLING INFLUENCE TO BREAK THE ARAB- ISRAELI IMPASSE. HOWEVER, AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO POINTED OUT IN HIS RECENT APPEARANCE ON " FACE THE NATION" (TEXT IN WIRELESS FILE), ONE MUST MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN EXISTENCE OF AMERICAN INFLUENCE AND THE NECESSARY PRE-CONDITIONS FOR USING IT EFFECTIVELY. WE DO NOT BELIEVE OUR INFLUENCE CAN BE MEANINGFULLY EXERCISED IN A VACUUM; RATHER WE CAN BE MOST HELPFUL IN CONTEXT OF CONCRETE NEGOTIATING SITUATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES. WE BELIEVE ONCE REAL NEGOTIATIONS STARTED BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAELIS, THIS WOULD HAVE SALUTARY EFFECT OF HELPING UNFREEZE POSITIONS ON BOTH SIDES. IN MEANTIME,
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 044805

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT NOTHING BE DONE TO FEED ILLUSION

THAT SOLUTION DEVISED BY OUTSIDERS IS A POSSIBILITY. GOVERNMENTS ENJOYING GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE ARABS CAN HELP BY GETTING THIS POINT ACROSS AND SEEKING PERSUADE THEM THAT NEGOTIATIONS, FAR FROM BEING CAPITULATION, ARE ONLY FEASIBLE APPROACH TO ACHIEVING GOAL OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. IT CONTINUES TO BE OUR JUDGMENT THAT PRACTICAL WAY TO PROCEED IS ON STEP-BY-STEP BASIS BEGINNING WITH INTERIM SUEZ CANAL AGREEMENT AS FIRST STEP TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO FINAL SETTLEMENT IMPLEMENTING SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242. ISRAEL REMAINS PREPARED ENTER PROXIMITY TALKS WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS UNDER U. S. AUSPICES FOR INTERIM CANAL AGREEMENT, AND USG REMAINS AVAILABLE TO HELP IF PARTIES SO DESIRE. PRINCIPAL PROBLEM ON EGYPTIAN SIDE IS CONCERN THAT INTERIM AGREEMENT WILL BE END OF THE ROAD AND THEIR CONSEQUENT UNREALISTIC INSISTENCE ON PRIOR ISRAELI COMMITMENT TO TOTAL WITHDRAWAL TO PRE- JUNE 5, 1967 LINE IN SINAI.

4. THE MAIN POINT YOU SHOULD STRESS IS THAT, WHILE NONE OF PARTIES HAS CHANGED ITS BASIC POSITION AND NO CHANGE IN FACT WAS EXPECTED DURING OUR RECENT ROUND OF CONVERSATIONS, THE DOOR FOR DIPLOMACY IS STILL OPEN. WE ARE ASSESSING OPPORTUNITIES IN LIGHT OF OUR RECENT CONVERSATIONS AND ARE LOOKING AT WHAT FURTHER MIGHT BE DONE. WE THINK IT IS IMPLICIT IN FACT THAT ALL THREE PRINCIPAL PARTIES TO ARAB- ISRAEL DISPUTE WANTED CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON, THAT THEY RECOGNIZE NEED FOR A CONTINUING U. S. ROLE.

5. WE AGREE WITH BELGIAN FONOFF DIRECT M. E. AFFAIRS' VIEW THAT SUBSTANTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE POWERS MORE LIKELY COMPLICATE THAN FACILITATE EFFORTS GET PARTIES ENGAGED IN NEGOTIATIONS. IN OUR VIEW, MOST USEFUL ROLE EC MEMBERS COULD PLAY WOULD BE TO IMPRESS ON PARTIES THEY HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE AND POSSIBLY MUCH TO GAIN BY TESTING EACH OTHER'S INTENTIONS THROUGH INITIATION OF GENUINE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. IN MAKING THIS POINT, YOU SHOULD SAY WE HOPE BELGIANS AND ITALIANS WILL CONTINUE TO BE IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH US IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT ANY EFFORTS THEY MIGHT HAVE IN MIND DO NOT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 STATE 044805

INTERFERE WITH ANYTHING WE MIGHT DECIDE TO DO IN THE FUTURE. ROGERS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONFIDENTIAL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: worrelsw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE044805
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JTMCAANDREW/ NEA: ALATHERTON, JR.: HLK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730324/aaaahjfg.tel
Line Count: 170
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 BRUSSELS 1224, 73 ROME 1849
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: worrelsw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23-Jul-2001 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <21-Aug-2001 by worrelsw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> wfs 971114
Subject: EC MEETING ON MIDDLE EAST
TAGS: PFOR, XF, EECM
To: BONN
BRUSSELS
COPENHAGEN
DUBLIN
LONDON
LUXEMBOURG
OSLO

PARIS
ROME
THE HAGUE
Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005